

Americans without health insurance, \$1 trillion dollars worth of foreclosed corporate assets, poverty rolls increasing, you would change direction. What are we about to do with this budget? Put our foot on the accelerator and do the same old thing that will result in the same policies.

In 3 years we have added \$3 trillion to the Nation's deficit, and nearly 3 million Americans have lost their jobs. Three wars, three tax cuts, \$500 billion in deficits. That has been the result of the economic policies of this administration; and this budget that we are going to vote on will continue the policies that have given America woefully inadequate services on health care, college education, jobs, retirement security, and also economic security.

This budget and the President's economic vision is really the tale of two budgets, one for America, one for Iraq. We have spent well over \$100 billion on Iraq's occupation but without promising the same future that we are promising the Iraqi children and families.

Let us just go through it.

When we talk about universal health care in Iraq and free job training to Iraqis, 44 million Americans go without health insurance and 8.2 million Americans are without jobs.

In the area of health care, 2,200 Iraqi health officials are being trained by the United States, and 8,000 volunteers in Iraq are receiving free training. In America, under the budget being proposed, we have cut health training funds by 64 percent here at home.

One hundred fifty clinics and hospitals in Iraq have been rebuilt, serving 3 million Iraqis. One hundred percent prenatal and infant coverage in Iraq. In America, community health clinics cut by 91 percent. Maternal and Child Health Care, Healthy Start, family planning, all frozen resulting from cuts in those budgets.

In the area of jobs, in Iraq \$60 million is being spent to train Iraqi veterans for past wars; and yet in this budget we gut veterans and veteran health care, resulting in every veterans organization opposing the budget we are going to vote on.

In the area of education in Iraq, we have built 2,300 schools for the Iraqi children but have underfunded Leave No Child Behind by \$8 billion here at home. Iraqi universities are getting \$20 million for higher ed partnerships. In America, we have cut \$91 million from the Perkins loans and frozen Pell Grants for college education.

In the area of police and security, \$470 billion is being spent, \$500 billion is being spent for Iraqi police. Yet the COPS, Community Police Program, \$659 million in this budget is cut from the police that we put on our streets here at home.

In the area of housing, \$470 million is being spent for Iraq public housing. Yet we have cut in this budget that the President proposes and the Republicans are going to vote on \$791 million from section 8 public housing vouchers.

In the area of environment, in Iraq, \$3.6 billion in waters and sewer improvement; in America, a \$500 million cut from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund that provides drinking water for every American.

In the area of ports, the Port of Umm Qasar in Iraq was completely rebuilt for economic development. The Army Corps of Engineers here in the United States, a 63 percent cut for port security upgrades.

Roads. We spent \$240 million on roads and bridges for the Iraqi infrastructure, and yet mass transit here in the United States in the budget will be frozen.

As the President seeks reelection he will be running on a pledge that he kept. He was opposed to nation-building, and he has kept his pledge. The problem is he is opposed to nation-building here at home in America. We can do it in Iraq, but we should not leave America behind.

MEDICARE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from Missouri (Mr. BLUNT) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BLUNT. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk briefly this morning about what is happening with Medicare. We are approaching a time when seniors will have an option for the transitional card that allows them to have immediate help with their prescription drug benefits.

At CMS they are working right now on a plan where seniors will be able to call in, talk about the drugs that they personally are taking, and for that 18 months or so of transition receive the help that they initially can get as we are putting this first major change since 1965 of Medicare into place.

Seniors across the country have been waiting for too long for Medicare to cover life-saving prescription drugs, not the fault of this House which for three Congresses now has tried to solve this problem and has voted to solve this problem.

In 1965, when President Johnson signed Medicare into law, prescription drugs were not a big part of health care. In 2003, President Bush understood that they had become a big part of health care. The Congress understood that as well, and we have strengthened that program for millions of seniors to be able to rely on new coverage in the future.

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For the first time in Medicare's history, a prescription drug benefit will be offered to all 40 million seniors and disabled Americans to help them afford the cost of their medicines. No senior has to take this benefit, no senior has to make a choice about changing their Medicare if they do not want to, but this offer is available to all seniors and, again, available to all who have

Medicare coverage because of a disability.

Americans of all ages can benefit from the creation of health savings accounts, which will give individuals more control over the cost of their health care and access to affordable, flexible coverage; and for the 888,126 beneficiaries in my State of Missouri who will have access to a Medicare prescription drug benefit for the first time in history, help is on the way.

In fact, 214,754 Missouri seniors will have drug coverage they otherwise would not have, and almost 270,000 beneficiaries in Missouri who have limited savings and low incomes, generally low income in that case would be for individuals with income below \$12,123 a year or for couples with income below \$16,232 a year, those individuals have even more benefits.

Initially, they get the card for free. They get \$600 of credit toward their drug bill on the card that they will receive this year and another \$600 next year. They will pay no premium when it comes time for the prescription drug coverage, if they opt to take that coverage; and they will be responsible only for a very small copayment, no more than \$2 for generic drugs, \$5 for brand-name drugs.

For people who have been struggling to pay for the drugs that their doctors told them they needed for their own health, this makes a huge difference in their ability now to have the kind of health care that they deserve, the kind of health care that is available, the kind of health care that will be covered under Medicare.

Mr. Speaker, all these numbers add up to savings. They add up to access to life-saving drugs. They add up to better health care for seniors of this country. This is a huge and important change.

I am pleased that this House could be part of it, that our friends on the other side of the building would join us and that the President signed this important legislation into law.

HONORING JOSEPH FORD

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. CHOCOLA). Pursuant to the order of the House of January 20, 2004, the gentleman from New Hampshire (Mr. BRADLEY) is recognized during morning hour debates for 5 minutes.

Mr. BRADLEY of New Hampshire. Mr. Speaker, it is with a heavy heart that I rise today to pay tribute to the life and the memory of a great American, Mr. Joseph Ford. Following a brief illness, Joe passed away on March 16. His death, a loss to us all.

As the veterans community in New Hampshire and throughout the Nation celebrates the life of this exceptional person, I would like to take an opportunity to honor a beloved New Hampshire resident.

Joe served our country valiantly in the United States Air Force and retired after more than 20 years of service. Following his service, Joe became an